

AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

OCTOBER 8, 2013

Community Outreach Efforts for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

The Los Angeles County (County) Department of Health Services (DHS) is rapidly improving its operations to implement the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). Each year, DHS hospitals and health centers treat 800,000 patients with 330,000 emergency room visits and 2.7 million outpatient appointments. Among the many benefits of the ACA are two provisions that will impact largely the current population of DHS patients: first, health care reform places a major focus on preventative health care; and second, it substantially expands Medicaid coverage effective January 1, 2014.

In order to prepare for the implementation of health care reform, DHS continues to make systematic improvements to deliver services in a patient-centered, cost

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effective and high quality setting that will benefit all residents of the County. Specifically, to address the major shift from a “reactionary” system of care where uninsured patients have resorted to the emergency room for basic health care to a true preventative care model, DHS created the Ambulatory Care Network and continues to empanel patients in newly created “medical homes”. Additionally, in order to prepare for an increase in patients resulting from the expansion of Medicaid, DHS is retooling the process for specialty care referrals by implementing innovative programs such as “eConsult” and developing an electronic health record; both will decrease wait times for patients to see a specialist and will result in better health outcomes.

However, system improvements alone will not achieve successful implementation of health care reform. In order to maximize the potential benefits afforded to patients by the ACA, the County must quickly inform the public about the changes at DHS; and more importantly, help the public better understand how to easily and effectively access services in this new era of health care reform. To that end, an essential component that DHS must expand is the “communication” of all system improvements to the County’s existing patient population and all residents throughout the County.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Direct the Director of the Department of Health Services (DHS), working in concert with the Chief Executive Officer, to immediately expand community outreach programs and begin implementation of a marketing plan to effectively communicate the positive system changes resulting from The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

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Such outreach and marketing shall include, but not be limited to, DHS attending and/or sponsoring community events such as health fairs, community meetings, and other events throughout the County with the objective of informing the public about the ACA and the available DHS resources.

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